



Underpass may be coming near Utah Valley University

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OREM, Utah (AP) -- Pedestrians and bicyclists going across University Parkway by Utah Valley University could soon get a new underpass for their travel.

The proposed pedestrian and bike underpass would tunnel under University Parkway east of the Sandhill Road intersection, said Paul Goodrich, Orem's transportation engineer.

University Parkway would remain at its current elevation.

An overpass was originally planned to move pedestrian and bicycle traffic back and forth from UVU, but Provo River Contractors says it is willing to construct the underpass instead.

"Separating bikes and pedestrians from the intersection will improve safety and may encourage more bike and pedestrian traffic." -Paul Goodrich

Plans call for the underpass to be 15 feet wide, more than 10 feet high and 200 feet long. However, Orem officials want the underpass to be wider.

"City staff members feel that 15 feet wide is too narrow for a tunnel 200 feet long," Goodrich said. "We want the underpass to be at least 20 feet wide -- and preferably 24 feet wide -- with a skylight in University Parkway."

Dal Hawks, Utah Department of Transportation manager for an interstate project, said the underpass is needed to keep the freeway interchange working as effectively as possible, and to create better traffic flow through the Sandhill Road intersection.

Congestion at the University Parkway-Sandhill Road intersection can be decreased by channeling the north/south pedestrians to the underpass, Goodrich told city leaders recently.

The signal time given to pedestrians can then be applied to moving more traffic.

"Separating bikes and pedestrians from the intersection will improve safety and may encourage more bike and pedestrian traffic," he said.

The issue will be brought to the City Council in September, Orem city engineer Ed Gifford said. Utility relocation could begin in the fall, and construction in 2011.

"We want this to be as nice an entryway into the city as it has been in the past," Gifford said.

Information from: The Daily Herald

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